

As a result, highway travel is growing at 2.3 percent per year and is now 2.8 trillion vehicle miles traveled per year. Commercial trucks alone move 14,000 ton-miles of freight each year for each person in the country. The demand for transit has increased exponentially. In recent years, transit ridership has increased by almost one million trips per day.

Congestion in our surface transportation system, especially urban congestion, is worsening as demand continues to outstrip the ability to add capacity. In the Nation's largest 75 large urban areas, an average commuter encountered 62 hours of delay in the year 2000. In that same year, congestion costs for these 75 urban areas totaled a whopping \$67.5 billion—3.6 billion hours of delay and 5.7 billion gallons of excess fuel consumption.

The challenges of travel growth are compounded by the overwhelming investment needs of our transportation systems. Just a few months ago, the Department of Transportation (DOT) submitted its report on the conditions and performance of our Nation's highways, bridges, and transit systems. DOT's Conditions and Performance Report estimates that all levels of government should be spending a combined average of \$127 billion per year to maintain and improve these transportation systems. Based on the historic Federal cost share, the needs assessment suggests a Federal highway and transit program of \$51 to \$76 billion per year. This level of funding is in marked contrast to the Administration's proposal to spend just \$37 billion on highways and transit in 2004 and only slightly higher levels in subsequent years.

Regrettably, this Administration has thrown up roadblocks to increased infrastructure investment at every turn. The Administration's proposed \$247 billion six-year reauthorization bill (SAFETEA), has a great name, but little else—it does not even begin to provide the level of funding necessary to address our infrastructure needs. Moreover the Administration, which has presided over the loss of an astonishing 3.3 million jobs, has sent repeated signals that it opposes any effort to increase infrastructure investment.

We cannot afford to shortchange our Nation's transportation systems. To effectively reduce congestion, to increase mobility, to truly improve highway safety, and to achieve continuing long-term increases in productivity and economic growth, we must invest in our Nation's transportation future. And we must do it now.

That is why the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure has proposed a highway and transit program to invest \$375 billion in our Nation's highways and transit systems over the next six years.

There are stark contrasts between our Committee's proposal and the Administration's proposal.

First, the Committee's proposal meets the investment needs identified in DOT's Conditions and Performance Report to maintain and improve our highways, bridges and transit. The Administration's proposal does not meet those needs.

Second, the Committee's proposal will provide badly needed economic stimulus and do so much more extensively than the Administration's proposal. According to the Administration's own statistical models, the Committee's proposal will create millions of new, family-wage construction jobs. The Federal Highway

Administration reports that every \$1 billion of federal funds invested in highway infrastructure creates 47,500 jobs and \$6.2 billion in economic activity. Moreover, a recent study found that the Committee's bipartisan proposal to invest \$375 billion in surface transportation over the next six years would add \$290 billion more to the Nation's Gross Domestic Product than the Administration's proposal. The Committee's proposal would also lead to an additional \$129 billion of household disposable income and an additional \$98 billion in consumer spending—millions of new, good-paying jobs, billions of dollars of new consumer spending; now that's the way to get the economy growing again!

Third, the across-the-board increased investment of the Committee's proposal will help us stem the highway death toll that grows ever higher. Last year, 42,850 people died and almost three million more were injured on our highways, the highest number of highway deaths since 1990. In addition to the enormous personal toll of these accidents, the economic cost is a staggering \$230 billion a year! To stem this tide, our Committee's bipartisan TEA 21 reauthorization bill significantly increases, and provides more overall funding, for National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), motor carrier safety, and highway safety construction programs than does the Administration's proposal.

Mr. Speaker, Congress must act on a full, six-year reauthorization as quickly as possible. Doing so will create jobs and stimulate economic growth, both badly needed in today's economy. We can effectively reduce congestion, increase safety, and improve mobility throughout the Nation if we invest in our Nation's highways and transit systems in an amount that is sufficient to meet our Nation's growing needs.

I look forward to working with Chairman YOUNG, Subcommittee Chairman PETRI, Subcommittee Ranking Member LIPINSKI, and all of the Members of our Committee and of this House, to invest in our Nation's transportation future.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SUE WILKINS MYRICK

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 25, 2003

Mrs. MYRICK. Mr. Speaker, I mistakenly voted no on rollcall vote 498, the Ney of Ohio amendment to H.R. 2622. I should have voted "yes."

WHAT EXCUSE WILL THEY USE THIS YEAR?

HON. STENY H. HOYER

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 25, 2003

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, the Members on our side of the aisle can hardly wait to hear what half-baked excuse our Republican colleagues will use this year for failing to complete our appropriations work on time.

Remember last fall's favorite punching bag? TOM DASCHLE and Senate Democrats.

As if the other body had anything to do with the Republican majority's refusal to even bring up eight of the 13 annual spending bills on this floor for a vote.

We all know last year's little secret: The House GOP—so famously derided as the "perfectionist caucus" by Former Speaker Newt Gingrich—didn't have the votes on its side of the aisle to pass those bills.

So, you pointed the finger of blame at the Senate.

When we considered the first continuing resolution last year, the majority leader (Mr. DELAY) said:

"The Democrat House leadership embraced the decision by the other body [the Senate] to proceed with no governing fiscal oversight called a budget. For any theoretical elective body, the decision to proceed forward without a governing budget would be foolhardy and grossly irresponsible."

The chairman of the Transportation-Treasury Appropriations Subcommittee, Mr. ISTOOK, passed the buck with even more gusto:

"The law requires both houses to enact a budget. This body has done so. The other body still has not done it. No wonder we have gridlock and deadlock."

But few could match the bluntness of my friend from Georgia (Mr. KINGSTON):

"There is a sinkhole on the Capitol, not over here, but over there [the Senate]," said Mr. KINGSTON.

"Now, this sinkhole ate up the budget this year. So here we are forced to pass a continuing resolution because we cannot deal with some group that does not have a budget."

Well, the last time I checked, my Republican friends, there was a Republican majority in this body, a Republican majority in the other body, and a Republican chief executive at the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue.

And while this house has passed all 13 spending bills, we have only adopted three conference reports.

So what is your excuse this year?

We all know the answer to that. It's your inability to compromise even with members of your own party.

And it's an affliction that is not just holding up the appropriations process.

It's also preventing us from passing an energy bill, from extending the child tax credit to 6.5 million working American families, and giving our seniors a real prescription drug benefit that is not designed to destroy Medicare.

The GOP has no one to blame this year for this legislative failure but itself.

HONORING THE LIFE OF PETER STROH

HON. JOHN D. DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 25, 2003

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a remarkable businessman, a dedicated philanthropist, a civic activist, a committed conservationist, and a splendid humanitarian: Peter Stroh. He was one of the finest men I have known, and as we celebrate the centennial year of the National Wildlife Refuge system, I want to convey the thanks and gratitude of the people of Michigan to Mr. Stroh and his family.